Study of Jonah - Part 1

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[0:00] The Lord's Blessing Reading at verse 3.

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.
Now, the book of Jonah reads in the Bible like a straightforward history.
But most of you will be aware that many people deny that this is a historical book at all. And they describe it as a fiction or a kind of parable which has a lot to teach but which never really happened. In other words, Jonah becomes an important figure even if he didn't exist at all. Something of the kind of, say, level of Sherlock Holmes or somebody like that. Somebody that exists in history in our imagination but never really had a real existence at all.
[1:34] Now, the word of God doesn't allow us to do that. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of him as a real man with real experiences. As a real prophet with a real ministry.

Because he said that just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale. So he, the son of man, would be three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth.
And then again in the second book of Kings. There is a reference to this prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai. That's the only other reference to him in the Bible.
Outside of this book which he himself wrote. But it's interesting that he is referred to there. It's as though God is confirming to us in 2 Kings chapter 14 that this man really lived.
And this man had the experiences which he describes in this book. Now, of course, one reason people describe this book as not historical is because they find it so hard to believe that this man was swallowed by a great fish.
[2:34] But miracles don't just occur in the book of Jonah. They're all over the scriptures. And if we believe one, it is as easy to believe the rest. We'll deal with that miracle when we come to it.

But Jonah comes before us in the scriptures as a man, as a prophet sent by God. Now, in these couple of verses in 2 Kings 14, we're told just a little bit about the man.
Hardly anything, but just a little. We're told that he was the son of a man called Amittai. And we're told the same thing here, incidentally, in verse 1, that the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai.
But we're told in 2 Kings 2 that he was from the village of Gathhefer, which belonged to the tribe of Sebulun in the land of Galilee. Now, that was an obscure village in an obscure place because even by Jonah's time, Galilee was already despised and was seen as second rate in terms of importance.
And as for his father, we know nothing. And that reminds us that God doesn't just call people with important backgrounds or privileged backgrounds.
[3:46] God doesn't just work with people who are mighty or who are noble or who have had training or early discipline or privileged positions. Not at all. In fact, you find that exactly the opposite is often true.

God shows his own sovereignty, his power, his love and his mercy by plucking the most obscure people and bringing them to do something in his own cause and in his own church.
And God could be asking yourself to do something and commanding yourself to put a hand to some work. And you feel you can't, that you ought not, because you're nobody. You're the son of somebody who is nobody.
And you're from a place that is insignificant. Well, God works with people like that. And Paul reminds us that not many noble, not many wise, not many mighty are called.
But God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise and to put them to shame. So God called this man from the obscurity of Galilee to make him a prophet to himself.

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[4:45] Now, when the word of the Lord came to him here in chapter 1, this was not the first time he had heard or received it. He was already a prophet to Israel.

And God had called him to give a prophecy to King Jeroboam II. Now, Jonah would have been a prophet in the sense that he would be regularly teaching and expounding the word of God.
But the word of God came to him, revealing the future. And the word of God told Jonah that in spite of Israel's wickedness, God was going to extend her borders and make her territory larger.
Now, what was remarkable about that was that Israel at that point was backslidden. And she was drifting away from God. And so it was an act of God's mercy towards Israel that he extended her borders and showered her with kindness at that time.
In other words, one of Jonah's most remarkable experiences up till this point was the long-suffering and undeserved grace of God, which poured mercy upon his people when they did not deserve it.
[5:57] Now, I suppose if Jonah had thought long and hard of the implications of that, he might not have been as staggered when this commandment came to him out of blue to rise up and to go to Nineveh. But however much he thought upon it, there's no doubt that when this word of God came to him, when one day God said to him, arise and go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, Jonah was staggered.

He never expected a message like that, and he didn't know how to respond to it. And this message set in motion what you could only call a remarkable series of events.
And to us, I suppose it reads like an adventure. It reads like a kind of story in a book. But to this man, it was a real flesh and blood thing. These were his experiences.
We read them, and we try and identify or sympathize. But he felt them, and he went through them.
This was the man who ran 60 miles to Joppa to get a ship going to Tarshish.
This was the man who went inside it in the midst of a violent storm, in the midst of its fury. This was the man who was thrown out of that ship at his own request. This was the man who sank in the sea and became entangled in the weeds and cried to God for mercy.
[7:15] This is the man who found himself squeezed inside the intestines of a whale, where he prayed and cried to God, and he was there three days and three nights. And this is the man who was spewed out of the whale back where he started.

This is the man. He felt it, and he went through it. And God in these things was showing his own mercy, his compassion, his kindness, not just to Jonah and Israel, but also to the great city of Nineveh and to the empire of Assyria.
Now, this book is full of remarkable lessons and remarkable experiences, and I wouldn't be surprised if all of us would find that there's an element of the Jonah in ourselves.
What's behind the way Jonah behaves? Well, it is the way that he responds to the call. That is what sets in motion the whole thing, because when God says, go to Nineveh, we're told that Jonah rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord.
Now, before we look at this flight, we'll look firstly, just very briefly, at the call. God called him to rise up, prepare himself, and go to Nineveh, that great city, and to cry out against it, to preach.
[8:41] It's called in verse, in chapter 3, the preaching that I bid thee. Go and preach, as I give you, to the city of Nineveh. And the message that I give you is to cry against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.

In other words, it reached such an intensity, like the wickedness of Sodom, that it cried out to God. And God commanded Jonah to rise up, and to proclaim their wickedness to them.
Now, their wickedness was terrible. Isaiah speaks of it, and he speaks of the pride of Nineveh, and the pride of Assyria. And their soldiers were famous for their pride, and for their brutality.
The Assyrians would skin people, and flay them. They used to cut their heads off, and pile them high on poles, one on top of another. They were famed for their brutality, and their armies were feared throughout the whole Assyrian Empire.
And wherever they came, people shook, and people trembled. And Jonah was to bring them face to face with their wickedness. And he was going to tell them that God was going to overthrow them, and that God was going to punish them.
[9:55] He was to cry against it. Now, it's not specified, but there's no doubt, but that Jonah was also to call them to repentance.

It's not specified here, anyway, in this particular portion, but there's no doubt that along with the cry against their wickedness, there was a summons, or a call to repentance.

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And that stands to reason, anyway, after all, there's very little point in summoning them, and telling them that God is going to destroy them, unless that is meant to have some effect upon them. What's the point of telling them the inevitability of a thing, unless along with it, there is a possibility of turning, or repentance, or pardon? And there's no doubt that that was there, that Jonah, in other words, was calling them to return to a God that they had heard of, and a God that they knew of. Even these mariners knew of him. The name of God, of Jehovah, was known worldwide. However much that knowledge was suppressed or ignored, it was still known.
[11:00] And Jonah went to summon them back to that God, to call them to repent, so that that execution would be stayed and stopped. So there was a call to repentance along with it.

And I think that in itself reminds us, by the way, that God is the God of all the nations, and the God of all the earth. Now we forget that.
And we can become so absorbed with ourselves, as individuals, we can become self-centered, we can become very inward-looking, as a people, inward-looking, as a denomination, or a church, and we can forget that God's concerns are worldwide.
And whatever our thoughts on the teeming multitudes of China or the teeming multitudes of India, they are known to God. And God cares for them. Did he not say to Jonah, he says, you cared for that plant which grew up when you had no hand in the thing.
And should not I have pity upon Nunavut, where there are a hundred and twenty thousand souls who cannot discern their right hands from their left? When I made them, created them, formed and fashioned them, should not I pity them?
[12:14] He knew them, each one. And we should feel the same, the same care and concern and the same burden for the hordes of the lost scattered all over the world, many multitudes of them in our own country.

Should we not feel that? And is there something, is there not something wrong with us if we don't? In fact, this is one of the central messages of the book of Jonah anyway, that Israel had lost its own concern for the heathen nations.
In fact, when Jonah was told to go, he didn't want to. He didn't feel he should. And he, as I'll come to it sometime later on, he didn't even feel that he should bring the gospel to the Assyrian people at all.
And that was representative of how inward looking and exclusive the people of God had become. They forgot that they were to be a light to a world in darkness and to bear the gospel to the lost, they forgot it.
And Jonah's the means whereby they are taught to rediscover that truth that God cares for the whole world and that the message of the gospel is for the whole world.
[13:26] And we always have to watch in the Christian life that we're not absorbed with ourselves. Constantly looking inward. Asking, how am I getting on?

What are my experiences today? What are my feelings today? When they are out there in need of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have to watch and we have to take care.
Now, when this message came to Jonah, what was the problem? Well, I suppose there was this anyway, that there was a fear in him because of the sheer scale of the task.
Nineveh was the most powerful city in the whole world at that time. It was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. And Jonah felt that he was a man alone and he would be a man alone.
And it was one thing to preach to the Israelites when they were backslidden. Because, in spite of the way they used to drift, they always had what you could call a national consciousness of God.
[14:33] There was always deep down in the souls of every one of them a feeling that they were a favoured and a privileged people and so they were. They could remember the covenants and the people of God and the word of God that had been given them.

And Jonah always felt, I suppose, however little, sometimes, the fruit that the word bore, he always felt that there was a response or a possibility of a response. But what was it to go in the midst of a city like Nineveh where the people seemed so brutalised and so barbaric and so way beyond hope? What was he going to achieve by standing there telling them that God's judgment was upon them and summoning them to repentance? There is the simple element of fear in that. And you know yourselves how fear can keep us from doing a duty.
How fear can keep us back. We were thinking in the morning in the seminary of how often the Bible says be strong and be very courageous. Be strong.

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Joshua has told that four times in chapter one of the book. Be strong and be very courageous. Fear can cripple. And the fear of man brings us near.
[15:44] And when we live in the fear of man we falter, we stumble, we please one, we please another. But the fear of the Lord is something we have to cultivate to do what God asks and to do what God requires.

And that is the simple matter of fear here. It was a hard task to which he was called. Now see to it, friend, that the hardness of a task doesn't keep you back from it. However difficult you think this might be and whatever problems you think it might involve you in, if God commands you so to do, then, indeed, do what the Lord requires of you.
He feared, I suppose, that he would be seen or viewed as a madman. Preaching through the streets of Nineveh that the judgment was to come. But there was another and a more important reason why Jonah had a problem and it's a strange one.
But there's no doubt that it's true. Jonah had a difficulty in taking the gospel to these people at all. And the reason he had a difficulty taking this word to them was because he fervently believed that these people should be destroyed.
and he fervently believed that the judgment of God should fall upon Nineveh because of its wickedness in the past. They had already begun to persecute God's people.
[17:04] And Jonah felt that they were the enemy and that they were the bitter enemies of God's people. And Jonah had a deep suspicion that if he went to call them to repentance and if he laid the word of God before them then that they might turn and that they might be pardoned and that they might be forgiven.

Now you may say well surely that's a strange thing for anyone to feel. A reluctance to take something to someone in case the word of God prevails upon them. Well it is a strange thing.
But who said that Christians don't feel strange things? There are many reasons why we could feel a thing like that. You suppose you see someone there and he's had a terrible life and maybe he's spent most of his life abusing some people in his own family, living a wayward and a careless life, oppressing people and maybe that person is suddenly converted and perhaps the first instinct that you feel is well, that seems strange.
Especially perhaps if other people in his family who suffer that his hands are not converted. Maybe the initial feeling is well what on earth is the logic behind this or what is the reason or the justice behind it until you're brought by God to view it in another light.
And of course the one sure thing that lies behind a thought like that is an inflated idea of our own righteousness. Is that not right? The minute we begin to think we're worthy, we begin to think others are unworthy of the grace of God.
[18:35] It's a sign that we think ourselves deserving of God's grace and of God's mercy. that had crept into Israel. It had crept into Israel and there was an element of it even in this man of God here in Jonah.

And he says in chapter 4 after the Ninevites turned to God and God didn't destroy them he said was this not my saying when I was getting in my country?
Was this not what I said and was this not what I thought? Therefore he says I ran away to Tarshish because I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful and slow to anger and of great kindness and repentance thee of the evil.
Therefore Lord take my life from me for it is better for me to die than to live. Jonah was a man waiting for the judgment of God to fall upon Nunavie and when it didn't fall and when God stayed his hand Jonah was distressed at it.
He was distressed at it. So he had a difficulty in bringing the gospel to those who were the persecutors of God's people. Hard as it may sound I think if you think about it you can understand it and in an element identify with it.
[19:53] Now in that fear and in that confusion what should he do? Well just do what God asks. It's as simple as that.

Many of God's commands just cut across us and they come without explanation they come without warning they come without clarification as what the future is going to hold they just come like they came to Abraham Abraham take thy son thy son Isaac thine only son whom thou lovest and offer him up to me as a burnt offering on Mount Moriah.

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how about that for cutting across flesh and blood? Again there's no clarification as to why as to what was going to happen nothing just God simply commands and it's Abraham's duty to obey it and the same thing here God says get up and go to Nineveh and it's Jonah's duty to get up and to go to Nineveh after all should we not keep our place and do our duty we don't know what God's going to bring out of anything God's ways are in the deep and they're past searching out who by searching can find out the almighty and God sometimes requires things of us and we're just to go ahead and we're not to consider the future too much and it's the first commandment not like that too the first command that God brings to your soul what is it well it is this rise up repent and believe the gospel you're not supposed to think and to wonder as to what's going to happen after you believe the gospel you're not supposed to think of every possible hurdle and every possible obstacle that's going to come your way if you take the cross and follow him you're not meant to think like that you're not meant to try to work out everything in advance or to reason what's going to come you're meant just to do it and

God means you to do it you're not to consult flesh and blood you're not to work out possibilities contingencies but just to believe and to take a step forward and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and that's what the Christian life requires of you too not just the first command but every command hear and obey but what did Jonah do well he did the worst possible thing we're told that he rose up to flee unto Tarsus from the presence of the Lord now this is a staggering thing what does it mean first of all to flee from the presence of God well he doesn't it doesn't mean that he tried to get away from God altogether in other words it doesn't mean that he tried to go where God wasn't because of course there is no such place and Jonah knew there was no such place he didn't think that on the west coast of Spain he wouldn't find God or that God wouldn't be there he wasn't that foolish so as to believe that and neither did he want to neither did he want to go to a place where God was not if it would be possible to do so he didn't want that that's just not what it means and neither does it mean that he just tried to flee from

Israel there are some who maintain that that's what the expression means that to flee from the presence of the Lord means to flee from Israel very many good and able men such as Hugh Martin and surely we can say that none of us are worthy to tie the laces on his shoes that man felt that again to flee from the presence of God meant to flee from Israel where God's presence was manifest we can see the sense in that but surely it means something a little different connected with it maybe but a little different very often in the scriptures when a servant serves his master that's represented as standing in someone's presence in other words to serve the king is often spoken of as standing in the presence of the king in Genesis 41 we're told that Joseph served Pharaoh and stood in the presence of the king that was an expression that covered his service or doing the commands of his master the servant executing and following out what the master requires him to do now that's the way in which we should understand fleeing from the presence of God here it means in other words that Jonah is trying to get out of the particular command that his master has placed upon him he's trying to escape the call he's trying to escape the burden of it by all means let someone else go to Nineveh but I cannot go to

[25:04] Nineveh and I will not go to Nineveh and when God says go east Jonah goes west and when God says to him go far east to Nineveh Jonah goes as far west as he possibly can he goes to Tarshish and he couldn't go further that was a Phoenician colony on the southwest coast of Spain I'm not sure I should have researched what it is called today it was a smelting colony at that time and it was the furthest city west known at the time now notice Jonah didn't just go to a ship that happened to be going there what we're told is that he rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord in other words it was his intention to go there as though he could be the last man asked to go to Nineveh it's as though he's saying well if I go to

Tarshish then whoever because I am as far west as can possibly be and there is no way that I can be called upon to go to Nineveh and so he runs away from the call that God placed upon him now often friends you can feel like running in your Christian life because of certain providences and situations you feel that you've got to run from your job you feel you've got to run away from the place where you're in you've got to run away from your situation you feel like David felt in Psalm 55 oh that I had the wings of a dove so that you could just fly away from your troubles and get rest and that is precisely what Jonah wanted he wanted to get away from the burden that was going to be placed upon him and to go as far away from that as possible except that Jonah didn't just think about it and dream about it

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Jonah did the thing and he ran to Joppa to make his way to Tarshish now friends if you run like that one way or another you'll find yourself in a whale's belly and God has remarkable ways of getting his way however much we try to defeat him in our obstinacy and in our perverseness God has remarkable ways of bringing you where exactly he wants you to be he has remarkable ways of doing it now I suppose it's true to say just to go back to what I said a minute ago I suppose it's true to say that if you don't do something another person will that God will find another person to do it yes that's true but you should remember that when God asks you to do something it's an honor for you to be asked to do it and
I don't know what that could be could be a small thing it could be just to give a hand in some small work to give some assistance it could be something in your spare time it could be something it is an honor and a privilege to be asked to do it and remember this too sometimes when you bypass a thing God bypasses you and you're brought to the point where you feel sorry when you see someone else doing what you should have been doing yourself and there's no doubt that that's true and in the very pain of seeing someone do what we should have done ourselves we're chastened and we're taught of God that when he commands us to do something we should do it but there's this too although it's true that God will find somebody to do a thing let me tell you this that if
God really wants you to do it you do it if he wants you to do it you will do it and whatever means whether it's a wind storm a tempest whether it's a fish or whatever one way or another in his providence God will bring you to do exactly what he wants you to do even if it means the belly of the whale he has his way of bringing his purposes about now here's Jonah he gets a command and he immediately goes in the other direction and follow him in verse 3 listen to the way that it's put Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord and went down to Joppa now that's a seaport a famous seaport in Israel he knows where he's going he's going to get a ship to Tarshish and go and behold the things there and he found a ship going to Tarshish he went to flee to Tarshish go with them unto
[30:18] Tarshish from the presence of the Lord and the word for ship it's a particular ship that means a covered ship in other words a ship with a deck Jonah goes down into it so that the end of verse five we're told that Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship where he lay and was fast asleep now that expression into the sides of the ship there's something interesting about this expression in the Greek version of the Old Testament it's translated as the belly of the ship the word in the Hebrew itself means the interior parts or the lower parts the inside and in the Greek it's translated belly and the remarkable thing is that if you follow that word you'll find that Jonah has to go inside three bellies before God brings him to his place three stomachs first the stomach of the ship where he sleeps and secondly

God brings him in chapter two into the stomach of the sea you look at that word that's used there chapter two verse two where Jonah said I cried I cried of hell I cried and thou heard my voice now I'll explain this when we come to it later on but the belly of hell there describes not the whale but when he was going down into the depth of the sea and when he was being caught and entangled in the weeds that was for him the grave it was the belly of hell the sea so he's the distinct processes in his experience there until God brings him back to where he should be tonight we're looking at the first belly here when he goes into the belly of the ship he goes down deep inside and he falls fast asleep now notice the man it's as though he doesn't want anything to do with anybody he doesn't go to have a talk with the mariners or to discuss the situation with the mariners he looks like a man who just goes on to the boat and he knows what he's doing he pays his fare and he goes straight away down inside and he finds a quiet corner where he falls asleep what does this sleep signify you'll notice that this sleep is so deep that when he panicked trying to deal with the situation Jonah is still fast asleep what does it mean does it mean as many think that he's become insensitive that because of his disobedience he's become so hard in his heart and so spiritually unaware I don't believe friends that that's what it means at all I don't think that's a reasonable way of looking at it I think it's different I think the fact is that this man is sensitive and what he's sensitive to is the fact that he knows fine well what he's doing and he's very much concerned about what he's doing and he's not going headlong in the opposite direction because he's careless and indifferent but he's going headlong in the opposite direction because he's determined to do that and he can't face doing otherwise but at the same time he knows that he's going against the express command that God gave himself personally and it's bringing misery into his soul what kind of journey do you suppose that

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Jonah had covering 60 miles down to Joppa do you suppose he was happy do suppose he went there whistling without a care in the world no he was going in the way of disobedience and he knew he was doing that and that shattered the man as it would shatter you and it has shattered you how often yourself you've done this kind of thing I suppose we can try to present a picture sometimes of the Christian life as though it's all obedience and we're always doing what the Lord asks are we are you are you always as a Christian doing what God requires of you to do can you honestly tell me that well Jonah's doing that Jonah's doing that and he's suffering for it in his own soul he's gone out of the way and he's exhausted by it exhausted I think it reminds us in a way of another man of God another prophet a mighty man of God in the Old Testament Elijah he left his post he left his post he run 90 miles and didn't stop until he got into the wilderness because he wanted to be finished with the whole thing he wanted out of it enough was enough he'd done enough he'd said enough and just when he thought things were changing they didn't change at all Jezebel's heart didn't change she got the people back round on her own side and so off he went and he lay under the juniper tree and he slept he slept as a man out of the way who knew he was going out of the way but who couldn't face doing what he was supposed to do have you ever felt that that that sheer exhaustion born out of a sense of failure and out of frustration and knowing that you were just doing the wrong thing and that you were in the midst of it well he was like that he was just a man [36:20] Jonah was a man Elijah was a man there's no point putting them up there and making them things that they could never have been and that no one else could ever be good men yes great men yes but men nonetheless with passions like you and passions like me and that's what they are and where and if we don't view them like that they're lost on us their teachings no use to us if we can't identify what good is it going to be yes they went out of the way and there they slept and they felt shattered and exhausted and I've no doubt in that kind of sleep that Jonah just wants to forget about it all it's as though he's willing sleep to fall on him and the deep sleep comes upon him the word means a very deep sleep because he just tries as it were to shut out the world that's become so difficult and become so impossible do you feel that like a Christian today as a Christian do you feel it that your providence your situation has become so hard that it is impossible and you're just running away from it and you're burying your head in the sand and it's as though you're hoping the whole thing will go away now let me tell you you can be a

Jonah without moving one foot because if Jonah says if God says do this and you don't do it you don't have to run away to Tarshish to be a Jonah if God says do something and you don't or do the opposite you're a Jonah and you find yourself in this kind of situation in a misery and you're not disobedient in one thing or in one area you're disobedient in the whole thing in the whole lot God has commanded you follow me he says and what have you done well you're going in the opposite direction and you know it tonight that you're going in the opposite direction and you're head strong in the opposite direction you're willfully running away from God rather than embracing him and that's pressing upon you maybe here and there the command comes in church it comes when you're in the presence of a certain
Christian this command comes follow me and then you spend the rest of your time trying as hard as you can to get away from it and to hide to get away from God well I'll tell you friend the worst thing that could happen to you is that you be successful what an awful thing for God to forget about you what an awful thing for God to leave you and to not to bother with you but to leave you does it ever frighten you that God could leave yourself does it frighten you that he spoken to you so often and invited you entreated you commanded you and you refused does it bother you does it worry you do you ever fear that you might never hear that voice again well the command is to you to come and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ don't flee from it in case you succeed what about the believer what are you running from you've called to some kind of work you're asked to do something like
I said before it could be in your spare time could be in your full time somebody here could be you're running in the opposite direction far from doing what you should be doing you're doing precisely the opposite doing things that keep you back from the ministry of the gospel and would distract you from the ministry of the gospel we thought last week of people who are called to the Lord's table because they're Christians and they still haven't come to the Lord's table you're running in the opposite direction when you should be at the front you take your seat at the back or you take your seat upstairs because you're afraid of the burden that it might put on your life you're afraid of what it might cost you you're afraid of ridicule God says go to my table and you say I won't you say I won't and you say I'm not strong enough well you'll never be strong enough until you go you know one of

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the most remarkable things I find in the Christian life is that people complain of weakness when they don't eat the food that
God provides them of course you're too weak to go to the Lord's table if you're not going to the Lord's table disobedience to God's commands always weaken us and every time we stay away from the nourishment that God provides we are progressively weakened in our souls how can we expect strength unless we use the very means that God has appointed to strengthen our souls in one way or another this keeps cropping up I had it this morning a couple of weeks ago God gives a thing in the doing of it let me say it again he gives a thing in the doing of it he doesn't give you strength as a package before you come to the Lord's table certainly that's not my experience of the life of grace it may be others what I always find is that the step of obedience brings the thing with it it is the effort to come to the Lord's table in obedience that will bring the strength in you along with it the strength just doesn't come as a pre prepared package like that not like that of course you're too weak because you're hungry and you're not feeding it's a means of grace which you're denying yourself from who knows how long you've been asleep in the ship because you're not at the [42:12] Lord's table you could have been in the belly of a whale for years and God is talking to you and chastening you urging you and treating you and moving you and still you're not doing your duty and duty it is for too long it is preached as a privilege let it be preached as a duty and a commandment to come to the table of the Lord and to flee from that commandment must bring some kind of repercussion in our life and there's an interesting thing here that when you go on a path of disobedience sometimes this can work two ways sometimes God shuts it off for you very quickly other times you can find a path of disobedience opening up for you almost like a favorable providence and that's a fearful thing he wants to go to Tarshish he finds a ship going he's got enough money to pay the fare he gets on and there's a place where he can go and rest aside by himself he wants to be alone he wants to be alone when

Saul was consumed with jealousy against David and David was playing the harp in front of him and was one of the only means of release that Saul could get because the Lord had departed from him and an evil spirit from God was troubling him Saul was progressively being given over to jealousy fits of envy and fits of rage heard the song that the woman sang Saul has slain his thousands but David has slain his ten thousands and that used to replay in Saul said constantly well when that rage came lo and behold what's by his side but a javelin it's not strange it would have been much easier if the javelin had not been there he couldn't have executed his wrath but there is the javelin and he takes it and he fires it at David and if David wasn't as quick and fit as he was it would have pinned him to the wall and sometimes when you're going out of the way you'll find a ship and you'll find enough money to provide the fare but one way or another
God will bring you back he's asleep in flight he's escaping from the command but it's not that easy praise the Lord it's not that easy because the unconverted might never be brought back you can flee from God's command and flee forever until you find yourself cast out to the presence of God but that's not so with the converted and let me close with this this could have been the end of it wouldn't have been awful if you had heard no more of Jonah but that can't be and there's this interesting expression in verse three but Jonah and then in verse four but the Lord notice how these things follow God says something to Jonah and we're told but Jonah and Jonah does something and then we're told but the Lord now for want of a better expression the
Lord always has the last but when it come to his own people Jonah has something to do that will go against what God wants him to do but the Lord he'll have the last word he's going to deal with Jonah and he has many instruments for dealing with us all fire hail clouds wind and snow all are the servants of God and he's going to send a strong wind and he's going to prepare a great fish to swallow Jonah because God has a work for Jonah to do and Jonah is the man to do it you see to it that you do what God asks you to do you walk in God's path and keep God's commandments for they carry an exceeding great reward next time we'll look at Jonah in the belly of the sea and whale let us kids let even go out
■ well at the earth e especially if you

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